

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 2849

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: CH, PINT
SUBJ: DEBATE OVER THEORY INTENSIFIES

1. SUMMARY: TWO RECENT PEOPLE'S DAILY ARTICLES ARE REMINISCENT OF THE THEORETICAL DEBATES OF THE EARLY 60S. ONE OF THESE, BY LI CHUN IN THE AUGUST 29 PEOPLE'S DAILY, DOES NOT COMPLETELY AGREE WITH CURRENT EMPHASIS ON THE PRINCIPLE ASSOCIATED WITH TENG HSIAO-PING OF "SEEKING TRUTH FROM FACTS" IN DEVELOPING NEW THEORIES. IN A PROVOCATIVE RESPONSE, FU TSO (PRESUMABLY A PSEUDONYM) DIRECTLY REFUTES THE EARLIER ARTICLE. WHILE THE MEDIA GENERALLY CONTINUES TO EMPHASIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF "SEEKING TRUTH FROM FACTS" THE APPEARANCE OF BOTH ARTICLES IS INDICATIVE OF PRESENT CONTROVERSY OVER THE ROLE OF THEORY AND IN THE FUTURE OF MAOTSETUNG THOUGHT. END SUMMARY.

2. IN AN ARTICLE WHICH ORIGINALLY APPEARED IN THE AUGUST 20 KUANGMING DAILY AND WAS LATER REPRINTED IN THE AUGUST 29 PEOPLE'S DAILY, LI CHUN PRESENTS CONVOLUTED AND OBSCURE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 PEKING 02849 121103Z

ARGUMENTS FOR NOT CONFUSING "OBJECTIVE REALITY" WITH "OBJECTIVE TRUTHS" THUS APPEARING TO RETREAT SUBSTANTIALLY FROM RECENT EMPHASIS ON "SEEKING TRUTH FROM FACTS." LI MAINTAINS THAT AT BEST "OBJECTIVE TRUTH" ONLY CAN RESEMBLE AND REFLECT REALITY AND SEEMS TO BE ARGUING THAT A BODY OF "TRUTH" IS CAPABLE OF EXISTING INDEPENDENT OF REALITY.

3. IN A PROVOCATIVE RESPONSE ENTITLED "A VIEW TOWARD ONE ARTICLE" FU TSO (PRESUMABLY A PSEUDONYM) TAKES LI TO TASK FOR USING CONFUSING CONCEPTS AND SAYS THAT THE THEORETICAL APPROACH IN THE EARLY ARTICLE IS COMPLETELY WRONG. "OBJECTIVE TRUTH" MUST COME FROM THE HISTORICAL EXPERIENCES OF THE MASSES AND CANNOT STAND ALONE. FU ARGUES THAT LI IS COMPLETELY MISTAKEN AND CONCLUDES THAT THE ATTAINMENT OF KNOWLEDGE IS A PROCESS WITH NO ABSOLUTES, NO FINAL ANSWERS. "KNOWLEDGE" IS ACHIEVED ONLY BY FOLLOWING MAO'S PREMISE OF "PRACTICE", -- "KNOWLEDGE" -- "AGAIN PRACTICE" -- "AGAIN KNOWLEDGE"; THAT IS, THE CONSTANT DEVELOPMENT AND TESTING OF THEORY AGAINST ACTUAL CONDITIONS. THIS PREMISE WOULD SEEM TO SQUARE WITH "SEEKING TRUTH FROM FACTS."

4. COMMENT: OPEN DISCUSSION OF THEORETICAL TENETS IN PEOPLE'S DAILY IS THE INEVITABLE RESULT OF TENG'S CALL FOR "SEEKING TRUTH FROM FACTS". WHILE THE PRC MEDIA IS STILL DOMINATED BY ARTICLES ARGUING FOR THE EVOLUTION OF THEORY AND AT TIMES AUTHORS EXPLICITLY RECOGNIZE THAT NO INDIVIDUAL, INCLUDING MAO, CAN PROVIDE ALL THE ANSWERS, LI'S ARTICLE AND FU'S RESPONSE ARE INDICATIVE OF THE SERIOUS CONTROVERSY AT ALL LEVELS OF CHINESE SOCIETY OVER THE ROLE OF THEORY AND MAO TSETUNG THOUGHT. ADJUSTMENT TO "SEEKING TRUTH FROM FACTS" AND PRESSURES FROM CONFLICTING IDEAS IN A DEVELOPING SOCIETY WILL NOT COME EARY TO A NATION THAT HAS BEEN DOMINATED BY THE THEORETICAL GUIDANCE OF MAO TSETUNG FOR OVER THREE
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PAGE 03 PEKING 02849 121103Z

DECADES. WOODCOCK

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